IN THE CLAIMS:

Kindly replace the claims with the following:

1. (Original) A video object encoding system, comprising:

an object evaluation system that evaluates a video object using a predetermined criterion; and

a mask generation system that generates one of a plurality of mask types for the video object based on the evaluation of the video object.

2. (Original) The video object encoding system of claim 1, wherein the plurality of mask types includes a pixel-based mask, a bounding box mask, and a macroblock-based mask.

3. (Original) The video object encoding system of claim 1, wherein the predetermined criterion examines a shape of the video object.

4. (Original) The video object encoding system of claim 1, wherein the predetermined criterion examines a texture of the video object.

5. (Original) The video object encoding system of claim 1, wherein the predetermined criterion examines motion information regarding the video object.

6. (Original) The video object encoding system of claim 3, wherein the predetermined criterion includes whether the video object shape is substantially circular.

7. (Original) The video object encoding system of claim 3, wherein the predetermined criterion includes whether an area of the video object shape is substantially similar to an area of a generated bounding box.

8. (Original) The video object encoding system of claim 7, wherein the predetermined criterion includes whether an area of a macroblock-based shape generated for the video object is substantially similar to the area of the generated bounding box.

9. (Original) The video object encoding system of claim 8, wherein the predetermined criterion includes whether the area of a macroblock-based shape is larger than the area of the video object shape.

10. (Original) The video object encoding system of claim 1, further comprising an MPEG-4 encoder.

11. (Original) A program product stored on a recordable medium, which when executed, encodes video objects, the program product comprising:

program code configured to evaluate a video object using a predetermined criterion; and

program code configured to generate one of a plurality of mask types for the video object based on the evaluation of the video object.

12. (Original) The program product of claim 11, wherein the plurality of mask types includes a pixel-based mask, a bounding box mask, and a macroblock-based mask.

13. (Original) The program product of claim 11, wherein the predetermined criterion examines a shape of the video object.

14. (Original) The program product of claim 11, wherein the predetermined criterion examines a texture of the video object.

15. (Original) The program product of claim 11, wherein the predetermined criterion examines motion information regarding the video object.

16. (Original) The program product of claim 13, wherein the predetermined criterion includes whether the video object shape is substantially circular.

17. (Original) The program product of claim 13, wherein the predetermined criterion includes whether an area of the video object shape is substantially similar to an area of a generated bounding box.

18. (Original) The program product of claim 17, wherein the predetermined criterion includes whether an area of a macroblock-based shape generated for the video object is substantially similar to the area of the generated bounding box.

19. (Original) The program product of claim 18, wherein the predetermined criterion includes whether the area of a macroblock-based shape is larger than the area of the video object shape.

20. (Original) A method for encoding video objects in an object based video communication system, comprising the steps of:

evaluating a video object using a predetermined criterion; and

generating one of a plurality of mask types for the video object based on the evaluation of the video object.

21. (Original) The method of claim 20, wherein the plurality of mask types includes a pixel-based mask, a bounding box mask, and a macroblock-based mask.

22. (Original) The method of claim 20, wherein the predetermined criterion examines a shape of the video object.

23. (Original) The method of claim 20, wherein the predetermined criterion examines a texture of the video object.

24. (Original) The method of claim 20, wherein the predetermined criterion examines motion information regarding the video object.

25. (Original) The method of claim 22, wherein the evaluating step includes determining if the shape is substantially circular.

26. (Original) The method of claim 22, wherein the evaluating step includes:

generating a bounding box; and

determining if an area of the object shape is substantially similar to an area of the generated bounding box.

27. (Original) The method of claim 26, wherein the evaluating step includes:

generating a macroblock-based shape; and

determining whether an area of the macroblock-based shape is substantially similar to the area of the generated bounding box.

28. (Original) The method of claim 27, wherein the evaluating step includes determining whether the area of a macroblock-based shape is larger than the area of the object shape.